

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 CU-04 ACDA-12
OMB-01 COME-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /080 W
-----115103 240727Z /10

O R 232101Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4643
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 497

FOR EUR/RPM AND EUR/SOV FROM USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, OCON, IS
SUBJECT: BELGRADE CSCE--ISRAELI CONCERNS ABOUT A MEDITERRANEAN
WORKING BODY

REF:TEL AVIV 10999 NOTAL

1. WE APOLOGIZE FOR NOT RESPONDING TO REFTEL SOONER, BUT
IT ARRIVED AFTER BELGRADE MEETING HAD ADJOURNED FOR HOLIDAY
RECESS. SUBJECT TO DEPARTMENT'S WISHES, EMBASSY MAY
WISH TO PASS FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT TO ISRAELIS. MALTESE
PROPOSAL (BM/66) AND SIX-NATION "COMPROMISE" PROPOSAL
(BM/M/1) ARE ESSENTIALLY AS DESCRIBED REFTEL. COSPONSORS
OF LATTER PROPOSAL ARE BEING ASKED FOR CLARIFICATIONS BUT
BASICALLY THEY SEEM TO ENVISAGE THAT EXPERTS MEETING
IN VALLETTA WOULD HAVE MANDATE LIMITED TO ECONOMIC
(BASKET TWO) AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS. THIS WOULD BE A MEETING
WITHIN CSCE, AND NON-PARTICIPATING ARAB-ISRAEL
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MEDITERRANEAN STATES WOULD MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS
ESSENTIALLY IN SAME WAY AS THEY MADE THEM IN GENEVA AND
BELGRADE. SECOND HALF OF THIS PROPOSAL, HOWEVER,
WOULD ENVISAGE BELGRADE MEETING ENDORSING A CONFERENCE
OR A MEETING CALLED BY THE MEDITERRANEAN STATES OUTSIDE
CSCE THAT COULD DISCUSS REGIONAL POLITICAL QUESTIONS. IF SUCH
A CONFERENCE WERE CONVENED BY ONE OR MORE MEDITERRANEAN

STATES IT WOULD PRESUMABLY INCLUDE THE CSCE NON-PARTICIPATING MEDITERRANEAN STATES AS FULL MEMBERS.

2. NEW DEVELOPMENT IS THAT SOVIETS INCLUDED IN DRAFT CONCLUDING DOCUMENT THEY TABLED AT RESUMED SESSION JANUARY 17 PROPOSAL FOR HOLDING OF MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS MEETING IN VALETTA TO DEAL WITH CONOMIC AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS ALONG SIMILAR LINES TO THAT PROPOSED IN BM/M/1. SOVIETS SAID THEY OPPOSED POLITICAL CONFERENCE BECAUSE MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY ISSUES WERE VERY SENSITIVE AND WERE BETTER DEALT WITH IN OTHER FORUMS EVEN THOUGH THOSE FORUMS HAD NOT YET BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

3. IT REMAINS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHAT WILL EVENTUALLY COME FROM MEDITERRANEAN INITIATIVES. MALTESE ARE COMPLETELY ISOLATED WITH THEIR MAXIMALIST PROPOSAL FOR A PERMANENT MEDITERRANEAN POLITICAL COMMITTEE. THEY HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THAT A MERE EXPERTS MEETING ON BASKET TWO AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. MALTESE AMBASSADOR TOLD CONFERENCE THAT IF SUCH AN EXPERTS MEETING WERE EVENTUALLY CONVENED IN VALETTA ONE OF ENTERTAINMENTS TO WHICH PARTICIPANTS MIGHT WELL BE INVITED WOULD BE PUBLIC EXECUTION OF TWO MALTESE REPS TO BELGRADE MEETING. PRIVATELY MALTESE AMBASSADOR HAS EMPHASIZED TO US STRONG INSTRUCTIONS HE HAS FROM MINOFF TO GET MORE THAN EXPERTS MEETING
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PROPOSED BY BM/M/1 AND NOW BY SOVIETS. HE HAS HINTED THAT IF CONFERENCE IS NOT MORE FORTHCOMING AND MALTESE DO NOT JUDGE THAT THEY CAN GET THEIR WAY BY WITHHOLDING CONSENSUS FROM AN EMERGING CONCLUDING DOCUMENT, THEY MIGHT WALK OUT. PRESUMABLY SUCH A STEP WOULD BE A LAST RESORT SINCE MALTESE ARE AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE ATTACHED GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO EVOLVING CSCE PROCESS THAT GIVES SMALL STATES MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER. A WALKOUT WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING, HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT WOULD LEAVE REMAINING 34 DELEGATIONS FREE TO REACH CONSENSUS ON MORE MODERATE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT. INCIDENTLY, MALTESE AMBASSADOR SAYS MINOFF DOES NOT WISH TO INTERFERE WITH MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS AND THEREFORE WOULD BE WILLING TO POSTPONE REGIONAL POLITICAL GATHERING FOR UP TO 18 MONTHS, BUT WHEN MEETING OPENS IT MUST HAVE BROAD MANDATE.

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4. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO POINT OUT THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE AND DANGEROUS TO ESTABLISH-OR EVEN TO RECOMMEND ANY SORT OF EXPERTS MEETING OR CONFERENCE ON MEDITERRANEAN POLITICAL/SECURITY SUBJECTS THAT SHOULD BE LEFT TO OTHER, MORE APPROPRIATE FORUMS. WE HAVE ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST ESTABLISHING EXPERTS MEETING ON BASKET TWO AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS MERELY TO PLEASE MALTESE. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT DECISION TO ESTABLISH AN EXPERTS GROUP MUST BE TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO DEMONSTRATED NEED AND PROSPECT THAT IT CAN PRODUCE MEANINGFUL RESULTS ON A SPECIFIC IDENTIFIABLE SUBJECT WITHIN LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME. WE HAVE NOTED THAT NO ONE HAS YET IDENTIFIED SUCH SUBJECTS FOR A MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS GROUP.

5. IF A POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT, SUBSTANTIVE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT IS DEVELOPED, THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE STRONG PRESSURES TO PRODUCE SOMETHING MORE THAN MERE WORDS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN. AS COMPOSITION OF SPONSORS FOR BM/M/1 SHOWS, SUPPORT FOR DOING SOMETHING IN THIS AREA CUTS ACROSS NORMAL ALLIANCE LINES. DIVISION IS
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ESSENTIALLY ONE BETWEEN SOUTHERN EUROPEANS ON ONE HAND AND NORTHERN EUROPEANS-NORTH AMERICANS ON OTHER. PRESENT SOVIET POSITION, EXEMPLIFIED IN DRAFT THEY TABLED JANUARY 17, HOWEVER, IS TO INSIST ON A SHORT, RATHER GENERAL CONCLUDING DOCUMENT. IF SOVIETS CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANTIVE INTEREST

TO WEST, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT CONCLUDING DOCUMENT MIGHT BE CUT BACK TO LITTLE MORE THAN A FACTUAL COMMUNIQUE WITH A DECISION ON DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SIMILAR MEETING. IN SUCH A SITUATION, THERE WOULD BE NO BASIS FOR TREATING MEDITERRANEAN ISSUES SUBSTANTIVELY, EVEN IF AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED, SINCE THIS WOULD UNBALANCE BELGRADE RESULTS. WE INTEND, THEREFORE, TO CONTINUE TO TAKE CAUTIOUS POSITION WELL TO RIGHT FLANK OF SPONSORS OF BM/M/1. WE WILL BE EMPHASIZING COMPLETE UNACCEPTABILITY OF ANY REGIONAL POLITICAL CONFERENCE WHETHER SPONSORED OR MERELY RECOMMENDED BY CSCE AND NEED TO PIN DOWN A PRECISE AND REALISTIC MANDATE BEFORE EVEN AN EXPERTS MEETING IN BASKET TWO-CULTURAL AREA CAN BE CONSIDERED.

6. MEDITERRANEAN ISSUES WILL BE UNDER MORE OR LESS CONTINUOUS DISCUSSION AS EFFORTS ARE MADE TO WORK OUT A COMPROMISE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT BY MID-FEBRUARY TARGET DATE FOR ENDING CONFERENCE. WE LEAVE IT TO ISRAELIS TO DETERMINE IF IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THEM TO CONTACT ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTS OR DELEGATIONS ABOUT THEIR PARTICULAR CONCERNS. WE WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME THEM BACK TO BELGRADE, CONSULT WITH THEM CLOSELY AND OFFER FACILIATIVE ASSISTANCE AS WE DID IN OCTOBER.
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